

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 SMS-01 /085 W
-----056649 200837Z /10

R 181625Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3195
INFO EC COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4616

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM PGOV NL UR
SUBJECT: DUTCH PROTEST OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS' TRIALS

REF: A) THE HAGUE 4065, B) THE HAGUE 4188, C) THE HAGUE 4408,
D) PARIS 25613

1. THE SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE "FREEZE" IN RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES
TO BE GIVEN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ATTENTION HERE. IN A
PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 17 AFTER THE WEEKLY CABINET
SESSION, PRIME MINISTER VAN AGT SAID AN INVENTORY IS
PRESENTLY BEING MADE OF DUTCH/SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH MIGHT
BE FROZEN BUT THE PREPARATION OF THIS INVENTORY WOULD NOT
BE COMPLETE UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH. IN A RELATED
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER
STOEL ASKED WHETHER THE ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE
SOVIET UNION ON UNGA MATTERS WOULD BE HELD. THE
ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT NO ARRANGEMENTS
HAD YET BEEN MADE FOR SUCH CONSULTATIONS (THESE CON-
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SULTATIONS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BETWEEN DUTCH AND
SOVIET DELEGATES IN NEW YORK PRIOR TO UNGA SESSIONS).

2. EDITORIALS AND INTERVIEWS WITH LEADING PARLIAMENTARIANS
HAVE REVEALED CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE NETHERLANDS MIGHT NO BE IN STEP WITH ITS EC
PARTNERS, THE LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN ELEMENTS

OF THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT, AND THE BASIC QUESTION OF WHETHER SUCH A FREEZE WOULD HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT. FOR EXAMPLE, A VOLKSKRANT EDITORIAL AUGUST 18 NOTED THE FRENCH NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE US REQUEST FOR COOPERATION ON THE DENIAL OF THE COMPUTER SALE AND CONCLUDED, "NO COMPUTER IS NECESSARY TO REALIZE THAT THE FIRST REACTION OF THE HAGUE TO THE RUSSIAN TRIALS WAS TOO STRONG TO BE FITTED LATER INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NINE AND THEIR EXPECTED FORMULATION OF DISQUIET ABOUT EVENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION." IN THE SAME VEIN, CDA PARLIAMENTARIAN SCHOLTEN, IN A LONG INTERVIEW IN THE SAME PAPER, SAID, "I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE CORRECT LINE FOR DUTCH DETENTE POLICY; EVEN LESS CAN IT BE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROCESS OF REFORM WHICH IS SO NECESSARY IN THE SOVIET UNION. IT CANNOT BE EFFECTIVE IF THE MOST IMPORTANT EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND AMERICA ARE NOT WILLING TO COOPERATE", A REFERENCE TO UNSUCCESSFUL DUTCH ATTEMPTS TO GET EC MEMBERS TO ADOPT A SIMILAR POSITION. SCHOLTEN ALSO REFERRED TO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WIEGEL AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND NOTED THE LATTER'S REFERENCE TO "A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION" RATHER THAN WIEGEL'S "FREEZE".

3. COMMENT. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY UNCOMFORTABLE IN REGARD TO THIS ISSUE BECAUSE IT PUTS THE NETHERLANDS OUT IN FRONT OF ITS EC PARTNERS, BECAUSE THE POLICY
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IS BEING QUESTIONED BY COALITION MPS AS WELL AS BY THE OPPOSITION, AND BECAUSE IT HAS REVEALED A CERTAIN LACK OF COORDINATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY LIKE THE ISSUE TO DISAPPEAR FROM PUBLIC ATTENTION BUT THAT IS NOT LIKELY, GIVEN THE INTEREST OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDIA.
JOSEPH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRIALS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978THEHA04616
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780340-0959
Format: TEL
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780846/aaaabmgf.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7745e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 THE HAGUE 4065, 78 THE HAGUE 4188, 78 THE HAGUE 4408
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1687934
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DUTCH PROTEST OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS' TRIALS
TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, NL, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7745e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014